

leave the floor. There are three excused. Senator Abboud, Senator Barrett is walking in. Senator Vickers, would you punch your button, please. We are all present. Senator Johnson, I understand you're going to close.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Yes. Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I want to begin my small conversation in closing on this resolution on retrocession in responding to Senator Goll's admonition to each of us here which is to be mindful of our vote because it's the only vote that we have on the issue. This resolution will not be voted upon three times, but rather one time, and the grant of retrocession once made today, if made today, is permanent. It is permanent and, therefore, Senator Goll has rightfully reminded us of the importance of the decision that we make today and I am reminded of the men, and there would have been women had they been allowed to do this, but the men who signed the Declaration of Independence who in one stroke of their own pen pledged their lives and their sacred honors and their fortune, win, lose or draw, on the American Revolution, one vote, one signing. Senator Lamb asked me why we don't simply have an assimilationist policy with respect to the American Indian, why do we make the independence of the tribe a big deal? Well, I go back 200 years to the Constitution of the United States which I have here, a hundred years before our own state was formed and the Constitution specifically recognizes the sovereignty of the Indian tribe. The Congress shall have the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several states and with the Indian tribes. It doesn't speak of the Indian people, it spoke of the Indian tribes. Two hundred years ago our forefathers recognized the essential sovereignty and integrity of the tribe, not the people, but the tribe, and that's been the basic operative policy and document of our country for 200 years. Now in 1952 Congress did decide to adopt an assimilationist policy and in effect began to break up theretofore federally protected tribal lands. The results were catastrophic for the American Indian. The classic case is Menomonie Reservation in Menomonie, Wisconsin that the Congress simply decided under an assimilationist policy to break up and within five years the Menomonie people which had been a proud independent people, a tribe, had lost a sense of self-identity and frankly became a rag-tag bunch to their sorrow and our shame for tolerating those kinds of conditions to develop. Well, under that same kind of thinking that took place in 1952,